

Alabama By-Products Company (ABC),
Coke Plant
(Drummond Coke By-Product Plant,
Tarrant Coke Works)
Birmingham Industrial District
Highway 79 (Pinson Valley Parkway)
Tarrant
Jefferson County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-19

HAER
ALA
37-TARR,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
ALABAMA BY-PRODUCTS COMPANY (ABC),
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO
ALABAMA BY-PRODUCTS COMPANY (ABC), COKE PLANT
(Drummond Coke By-Product Plant, Tarrant Coke Works)

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Location: Pinson Valley Highway, Tarrant, Jefferson County. Access to the plant is from US 79 (Pinson Valley Parkway) at Huntsville Road just northeast of the I 20-59 Exit 128 at Tallapoosa Street.

Date of Construction: 1918

Builder/Architect/
Engineer: Multiple

Present Owner: Drummond

Description: 75 acre site with rail access to CSX and Norfolk Southern, contains three batteries of coke ovens, including 78 Wilputte coke ovens constructed 1968-1969, 25 Koppers ovens constructed in 1941, and 29 Koppers ovens constructed in 1952; a 30 acre storage yard for coals and coke, shipping, loading facilities, crushing and conveying operations, a power house with historic and current steam engines and boilers and five or six of the original brick industrial buildings including the original power house, bath house and general office building. All structures are built of red brick laid in a similar bond, with brick pilasters ornamenting the gable ends and windows squared. Company officials describe their style as "pilaster style."

Project Information: This report is based upon written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

Significance: In 1918, the Koppers Company, a Pittsburgh engineering firm, constructed this coke by-product plant for the federal government as part of the World War I effort. Originally known as Birmingham By-Product Coke Company, this coke plant, the National Cast Iron Pipe Plant (est. 1912) and other quarry operations in the area attracted workers, who incorporated the City of Tarrant on August 17,

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1918, population 734. Alabama By-Products Corporation (ABC), formed in December of 1920 to mine coal and produce coke, acquired the Koppers plant and increased its capacity several times, with proportionate increases in primary by-products: ammonia, benzol and coal tar. The plant has operated continuously ever since. It produces foundry coke, crude light oil, tar and sulphate of ammonia. It has been known as the ABC Coke Division of Drummond since the ABC-Drummond merger in 1985. Drummond promotional literature claims the Tarrant plant produces more foundry coke than any other plant in the U.S. Capacity production is 2,150 tons of coke a day. This coke is shipped by truck and rail. Drummond is the sole supplier for General Motors Central Foundry Division, the largest U.S. consumer of foundry coke. Drummond mines in northern Jefferson and Walker Counties supply metallurgical coal to the Tarrant plant.

Historic plant buildings and coke ovens dating to the 1950s at this active plant are in excellent condition.

SOURCES CONSULTED

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Site Visit led by Philip Grover, Jim Strickland, Drummond Public Relations; J.D. Duren (former plant superintendent), 360 Kilough Circle, 3/4/92